CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1. (Currently Amended) A method for defining and monitoring a service level agreement, wherein the service level agreement defines for a particular network a level of service that has been offered to a customer by a service provider, the method comprising the computer-implemented steps of:

creating a schema that provides a set of rules for defining both the contents of service level agreements and how to organize the contents of service level agreements;

receiving first information defining the service level agreement, wherein said information defines one or more tests for monitoring the level of service that has been offered to the customer; ~~and~~

verifying that the information defining the service level agreement conforms to the set of rules in said schema;

receiving second information defining a service level contract, wherein said second information defines apply times for performing the one or more tests; and

verifying that said first information defining the service level agreement and said second information defining the service level contract conform with the level of service that has been offered to the customer by the service provider.

2. (Previously Presented) The method recited in claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

if said information defining the service level agreement conforms to the set of rules in said schema, then

distributing the one or more tests to one or more agents that are configured to communicate with devices that are associated with the particular network;

receiving result information based on the devices performing the one or more tests; and

creating and storing reporting information that indicates whether the customer is receiving the level of service that has been offered.

3. (Original) The method recited in claim 1, wherein the step of creating a schema includes the step of generating a schema based on Extensible Markup Language (XML), wherein the schema provides a template for defining service level agreements.

4. (Original) The method recited in claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
generating, at a server, interface data for defining service level agreements; and
communicating the interface data to a client that is remote from said server, wherein the interface data allows users to define tests for monitoring the level of service that is being provided by the service provider.

5. (Previously Presented) The method recited in claim 1, further comprising the step of verifying that the particular network includes one or more devices that may be configured to perform the one or more tests.

6. (Currently Amended) A computer readable medium carrying sequences of instructions for defining and monitoring a service level agreement, wherein the service level agreement defines for a particular network a level of service that has been offered to a customer by a service provider, the sequences of instructions including instructions for performing the steps of:
creating a schema that provides a set of rules for defining both the contents of service level agreements and how to organize the contents of service level agreements;
receiving <u>first</u> information defining the service level agreement, wherein said information defines one or more tests for monitoring the level of service that has been offered to the customer; ~~and~~

verifying that the information defining the service level agreement conforms to the set of rules in said schema;

receiving second information defining a service level contract, wherein said second information defines apply times for performing the one or more tests; and

verifying that said first information defining the service level agreement and said second information defining the service level contract conform with the level of service that has been offered to the customer by the service provider.

7. (Previously Presented) The computer readable medium recited in claim 6, further comprising instructions for performing the steps of:

if said information defining the service level agreement conforms to the set of rules in said schema, then

distributing the one or more tests to one or more agents that are configured to communicate with devices that are associated with the particular network;

receiving result information based on the devices performing the one or more tests; and

creating and storing reporting information that indicates whether the customer is receiving the level of service that has been offered.

8. (Original) The computer readable medium recited in claim 6, wherein the step of creating a schema includes the step of generating a schema based on Extensible Markup Language (XML), wherein the schema provides a template for defining service level agreements.

9. (Original) The computer readable medium recited in claim 6, further comprising instructions for performing the steps of:

generating, at a server, interface data for defining service level agreements; and

communicating the interface data to a client that is remote from said server, wherein the interface data allows users to define tests for monitoring the level of service that is being provided by the service provider.

10. (Currently Amended) A network device configured for defining and monitoring a service level agreement that defines for a particular network a level of service that has been offered to a customer by a service provider, comprising:

a network interface;

a processor coupled to the network interface and receiving information from the network interface;

a computer-readable medium accessible by the processor and comprising one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by the processor, cause the processor to carry out the steps of:

creating a schema that provides a set of rules for defining both the contents of service level agreements and how to organize the contents of service level agreements;

receiving first information defining the service level agreement, wherein said information defines one or more tests for monitoring the level of service that has been offered to the customer; ~~and~~

verifying that the information defining the service level agreement conforms to the set of rules in said schema;

receiving second information defining a service level contract, wherein said second information defines apply times for performing the one or more tests; and

verifying that said first information defining the service level agreement and said second information defining the service level contract conform with the level of service that has been offered to the customer by the service provider.

11. (Currently Amended) A network device configured for defining and monitoring a service level agreement that defines for a particular network a level of service that has been offered to a customer by a service provider, comprising:

means for creating a schema that provides a set of rules for defining both the contents of service level agreements and how to organize the contents of service level agreements;

means for receiving first information defining the service level agreement, wherein said information defines one or more tests for monitoring the level of service that has been offered to the customer; ~~and~~

means for verifying that the information defining the service level agreement conforms to the set of rules in said schema;

means for receiving second information defining a service level contract, wherein said second information defines apply times for performing the one or more tests; and

means for verifying that said first information defining the service level agreement and said second information defining the service level contract conform with the level of service that has been offered to the customer by the service provider.

12. (Currently Amended) A method for monitoring a service level agreement, wherein the service level agreement defines for a particular network a level of service that has been offered to a customer by a service provider, the method comprising the computer-implemented steps of:

receiving information defining the service level agreement, wherein said information defines one or more tests for monitoring the level of service that has been offered to the customer;

distributing the one or more tests to one or more agents that are configured to communicate with devices that are associated with the particular network;

receiving result information based on the devices performing the one or more tests; ~~and~~

creating and storing reporting information that indicates whether the customer is receiving the level of service that has been offered;

generating, at a server, interface data for defining the service level agreement; and

communicating the interface data to a client that is remote from said server, wherein the interface data allows users to define tests for monitoring the level of service that is being provided by the service provider.

13. (Original) The method recited in claim 12, further comprising the steps of:

generating a schema based on Extensible Markup Language (XML), wherein the schema provides a template for defining service level agreements; and

wherein the step of receiving information defining a service level agreement includes the step of receiving information that has been generated in accordance with said schema.

14. (Cancelled)

15. (Currently Amended) A computer readable medium carrying sequences of instructions for monitoring a service level agreement, wherein the service level agreement defines for a particular network a level of service that has been offered to a customer by a service provider, the sequences of instructions including instructions for performing the steps of:

receiving information defining the service level agreement, wherein said information defines one or more tests for monitoring the level of service that has been offered to the customer;

distributing the one or more tests to one or more agents that are configured to communicate with devices that are associated with the particular network;

receiving result information based on the devices performing the one or more tests; ~~and~~

creating and storing reporting information that indicates whether the customer is receiving the level of service that has been offered;

generating, at a server, interface data for defining the service level agreement; and

communicating the interface data to a client that is remote from said server, wherein the interface data allows users to define tests for monitoring the level of service that is being provided by the service provider.

16. (Original) The computer readable medium recited in claim 15, further comprising instructions for performing the steps of:
generating a schema based on Extensible Markup Language (XML), wherein the schema provides a template for defining service level agreements; and
wherein the step of receiving information defining a service level agreement configuration includes the step of receiving information that has been generated in accordance with said schema.

17. (Cancelled)

18. (Currently Amended) A network device configured for monitoring a service level agreement that defines for a particular network a level of service that has been offered to a customer by a service provider, comprising:
a network interface;
a processor coupled to the network interface and receiving information from the network interface;
a computer-readable medium accessible by the processor and comprising one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by the processor, cause the processor to carry out the steps of:
receiving information defining the service level agreement, wherein said information defines one or more tests for monitoring the level of service that has been offered to the customer;
distributing the one or more tests to one or more agents that are configured to communicate with devices that are associated with the particular network;
receiving result information based on the devices performing the one or more tests; ~~and~~

creating and storing reporting information that indicates whether the customer is receiving the level of service that has been offered;

generating, at a server, interface data for defining the service level agreement; and

communicating the interface data to a client that is remote from said server, wherein the interface data allows users to define tests for monitoring the level of service that is being provided by the service provider.

19. (Original) The network device recited in claim 18, further executing instructions for performing the steps of:

generating a schema based on Extensible Markup Language (XML), wherein the schema provides a template for defining service level agreements; and

wherein the step of receiving information defining a service level agreement configuration includes the step of receiving information that has been generated in accordance with said schema.

20. (Cancelled)

21. (Currently Amended) A network device configured for monitoring a service level agreement that defines for a particular network a level of service that has been offered to a customer by a service provider, comprising:

means for receiving information defining the service level agreement, wherein said information defines one or more tests for monitoring the level of service that has been offered to the customer;

means for distributing the one or more tests to one or more agents that are configured to communicate with devices that are associated with the particular network;

means for receiving result information based on the devices performing the one or more tests; ~~and~~

means for creating and storing reporting information that indicates whether the customer is receiving the level of service that has been offered;

means for generating, at a server, interface data for defining the service level agreement; and

means for communicating the interface data to a client that is remote from said server, wherein the interface data allows users to define tests for monitoring the level of service that is being provided by the service provider.

22. (Previously Presented) The method recited in claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

storing information that defines the level of service that has been guaranteed to the customer by the service provider;

wherein the one or more tests are one or more metric tests, and the step of receiving information defining the service level agreement comprises:

receiving through a standardized open interface metric parameter information that defines the one or more metric tests that are to be used to verify that the customer is receiving the level of service that has been guaranteed by the service provider; and

verifying that based on the metric parameter information, the one or more metric tests will provide an appropriate set of tests for measuring the level of service that is being provided to the customer by the service provider.

23. (Original) The method recited in claim 22, wherein the step of verifying the one or more metric tests includes the step of verifying that the one or more metric tests conform to a standard of testing that has been approved by the service provider.

24. (Cancelled)

25. (Previously Presented) The computer readable medium recited in claim 6, further comprising instructions for performing the step of verifying that the particular network includes one or more devices that may be configured to perform the one or more tests.

26. (Previously Presented) The network device recited in claim 10, wherein the computer-readable medium further comprises instruction for performing the steps of:

if said information defining the service level agreement conforms to the set of rules in said schema, then

distributing the one or more tests to one or more agents that are configured to communicate with devices that are associated with the particular network;

receiving result information based on the devices performing the one or more tests; and

creating and storing reporting information that indicates whether the customer is receiving the level of service that has been offered.

27. (Previously Presented) The network device recited in claim 10, wherein the instructions for creating a schema includes instructions for generating a schema based on Extensible Markup Language (XML), wherein the schema provides a template for defining service level agreements.

28. (Previously Presented) The network device recited in claim 10, wherein the computer-readable medium further comprises instruction for performing the steps of:

generating, at a server, interface data for defining service level agreements; and

communicating the interface data to a client that is remote from said server, wherein the interface data allows users to define tests for monitoring the level of service that is being provided by the service provider.

29. (Previously Presented) The network device recited in claim 10, wherein the computer-readable medium further comprises instruction for performing the step of verifying that the particular network includes one or more devices that may be configured to perform the one or more tests.

30. (Previously Presented) The network device recited in claim 11, further comprising:
if said information defining the service level agreement conforms to the set of rules in said schema,
means for distributing the one or more tests to one or more agents that are configured to communicate with devices that are associated with the particular network;
means for receiving result information based on the devices performing the one or more tests; and
means for creating and storing reporting information that indicates whether the customer is receiving the level of service that has been offered.

31. (Previously Presented) The network device recited in claim 11, wherein the means for creating a schema includes means for generating a schema based on Extensible Markup Language (XML), wherein the schema provides a template for defining service level agreements.

32. (Previously Presented) The network device recited in claim 11, further comprising:
means for generating, at a server, interface data for defining service level agreements; and
means for communicating the interface data to a client that is remote from said server, wherein the interface data allows users to define tests for monitoring the level of service that is being provided by the service provider.

33. (Previously Presented) The network device recited in claim 11, further comprising means for verifying that the particular network includes one or more devices that may be configured to perform the one or more tests.

34. (Previously Presented) The network device recited in claim 21, further comprising:
means for generating a schema based on Extensible Markup Language (XML), wherein the schema provides a template for defining service level agreements; and
wherein the means for receiving information defining a service level agreement includes means for receiving information that has been generated in accordance with said schema.

35. (Cancelled)

36. (Previously Presented) The computer readable medium recited in claim 6, further comprising instructions for performing the steps of:
storing information that defines the level of service that has been guaranteed to the customer by the service provider;
wherein the one or more tests are one or more metric tests, and the step of receiving information defining the service level agreement comprises:
receiving through a standardized open interface metric parameter information that defines the one or more metric tests that are to be used to verify that the customer is receiving the level of service that has been guaranteed by the service provider; and
verifying that based on the metric parameter information, the one or more metric tests will provide an appropriate set of tests for measuring the level of service that is being provided to the customer by the service provider.

37. (Previously Presented) The computer readable medium recited in claim 36, wherein the step of verifying the one or more metric tests includes the step of verifying that the one or more metric tests conform to a standard of testing that has been approved by the service provider.

38. (Cancelled)

39. (Previously Presented) The network device recited in claim 10, wherein the computer-readable medium further comprises instructions for performing the steps of:

storing information that defines the level of service that has been guaranteed to the customer by the service provider;

wherein the one or more tests are one or more metric tests, and the instructions for receiving information defining the service level agreement includes instructions for:

receiving through a standardized open interface metric parameter information that defines the one or more metric tests that are to be used to verify that the customer is receiving the level of service that has been guaranteed by the service provider; and

verifying that based on the metric parameter information, the one or more metric tests will provide an appropriate set of tests for measuring the level of service that is being provided to the customer by the service provider.

40. (Previously Presented) The network device recited in claim 39, wherein the instructions for verifying the one or more metric tests includes instructions for verifying that the one or more metric tests conform to a standard of testing that has been approved by the service provider.

41. (Cancelled)

42. (Previously Presented) The network device recited in claim 11, further comprising:

means for storing information that defines the level of service that has been guaranteed to the customer by the service provider;

wherein the one or more tests are one or more metric tests, and the means for receiving information defining the service level agreement comprises:

means for receiving through a standardized open interface metric parameter information that defines the one or more metric tests that are to be used to verify that the customer is receiving the level of service that has been guaranteed by the service provider; and

means for verifying that based on the metric parameter information, the one or more metric tests will provide an appropriate set of tests for measuring the level of service that is being provided to the customer by the service provider.

43. (Previously Presented) The network device recited in claim 11, wherein the means for verifying the one or more metric tests includes means for verifying that the one or more metric tests conform to a standard of testing that has been approved by the service provider.

44. (Cancelled)